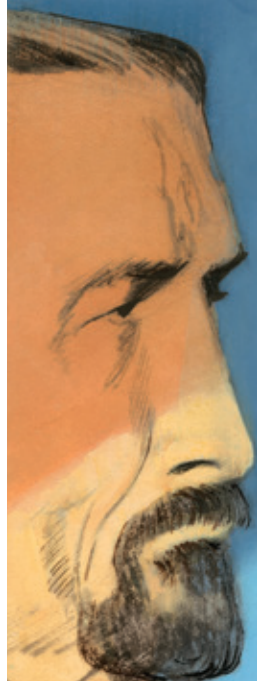




JANUS FILMS *presents*

THE OTHER SIDE OF HOPE

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
AKI KAURISMÄKI



Finland | 2017 | 98 minutes | Color | 1.85:1 aspect ratio | In Finnish, English, and Arabic with English subtitles | Screening format: DCP | Dolby SRD

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THE OTHER SIDE OF HOPE

This wry, melancholic comedy from Aki Kaurismäki, a clear-eyed response to the current refugee crisis, follows two people searching for a place to call home. Displaced Syrian Khaled (Sherwan Haji) lands in Helsinki as a stowaway; meanwhile, middle-aged salesman Wikström (Sakari Kuosmanen) leaves behind his wife and job and buys a conspicuously unprofitable seafood restaurant. After Khaled is denied asylum, he decides not to return to Aleppo—and the paths of the two men cross fortuitously. As deadpan as the best of the director's work, and with a deep well of empathy for its down-but-not-out characters (many of them played by members of Kaurismäki's ever-reliable stock company), *The Other Side of Hope* is a bittersweet tale of human kindness in the face of official indifference.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

With this film, I try my best to shatter the European way of only seeing refugees either as pitiful victims or as arrogant economic immigrants invading our societies to steal our jobs, our wives, our homes, and our cars. In European history, the creation and enforcement of stereotypical prejudices carry a sinister echo. I freely admit that *The Other Side of Hope* is, to a certain degree, a so-called "tendency" film, unscrupulously attempting to influence the opinions of its viewers while trying to manipulate their emotions in order to reach that goal.

Because these efforts will naturally fail, what will remain is, I hope, an upright and slightly melancholy story carried along by humor, but in other ways an almost realistic film about certain human destinies here in this world today.

—Aki Kaurismäki

IN THE WORDS OF AKI KAURISMÄKI

The quotes below are from Kaurismäki's press conference at the 2017 Berlin Film Festival, where *The Other Side of Hope* premiered.

"Since I'm basically absolutely lazy, I had to make a trilogy to get myself to do something. But after *Le Havre*, it has changed from a 'Harbor' trilogy to a 'Refugee' trilogy. I changed the name. I hope the third one will be a happy comedy."

"In Finland, thirty thousand Iraqi refugees arrived, and both the young Finnish and old Finnish took it as a war—'somebody's attacking us,' like Russia fifty or sixty years ago. This attitude was intolerable, in my opinion, and I didn't like to see that in my compatriots."

"I'm very modest. I don't want to change the audience; I want to change the world. But my manipulative abilities aren't good enough, so I think I'll have to limit myself to Europe."

"Jean Renoir said that with *Grand Illusion*, he tried to stop the Second World War. Later, he said it was a lousy failure: 'I couldn't stop it.' Cinema doesn't have that kind of influence, but this is an honest try to force people to see that we are all the same, that we are all human, and that tomorrow it will be you who will be a refugee."

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

1981	<i>The Saimaa Gesture</i> (documentary, codirected by Mika Kaurismäki)	1994	<i>Total Balalaika Show</i> (documentary) <i>Take Care of Your Scarf, Tatiana</i> <i>Leningrad Cowboys Meet Moses</i>
1983	<i>Crime and Punishment</i>	1996	<i>Drifting Clouds</i> <i>Always Be a Human</i> (short) <i>Employment Agent</i> (short)
1985	<i>Calamari Union</i>	1999	<i>Juha</i>
1986	<i>Shadows in Paradise</i> "Rocky VI" (music video)	2002	<i>The Man Without a Past</i> <i>Dogs Have No Hell</i> (segment of <i>Ten Minutes Older: The Trumpet</i>)
1987	<i>Hamlet Goes Business</i> "Thru the Wire" (music video) "Rich Little Bitch" (music video)	2004	<i>Bico</i> (segment of <i>Visions of Europe</i>)
1988	<i>Ariel</i> "L.A. Woman" (music video)	2006	<i>Lights in the Dusk</i>
1989	<i>Leningrad Cowboys Go America</i> <i>Dirty Hands</i> (TV movie)	2007	<i>The Foundry</i> (segment of <i>To Each His Own Cinema</i>)
1990	<i>The Match Factory Girl</i> <i>I Hired a Contract Killer</i>	2011	<i>Le Havre</i>
1992	<i>La vie de bohème</i> "Those Were the Days" (music video)	2012	<i>Tavern Man</i> (segment of <i>Centro Histórico</i>)
1993	"These Boots" (music video)	2013	<i>Juice Leskinen & Grand Slam: The Pieksämäki Railway Station Blues</i> (documentary short)
		2017	<i>The Other Side of Hope</i>

ACTORS

Sherwan Haji (born 1985) plays the role of Khaled, a Syrian refugee. Haji, who himself came to Finland from Syria in 2010, graduated from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus in 2008. Haji acted in several TV series in Syria and continued his studies at the Cambridge School of Art at Anglia Ruskin University in 2015, graduating last year with a master-of-arts degree. In addition to acting, Haji has, since 2012, written and directed several short films and video installations for Lion's Line, his production company. This is Haji's first lead role in a feature film. The film's soundtrack also includes music performed by Haji on the saz, a traditional stringed instrument.

In *The Other Side of Hope*'s other lead role, that of Wikström the traveling salesman, is **Sakari Kuosmanen** (born 1956), one of Aki Kaurismäki's favorite actors. With a long career as both an actor and a musician, Kuosmanen is perhaps best remembered for playing the title role in Kaurismäki's film *Juha*, the gruff harbor guard in *The Man Without a Past*, and the doorman in *Drifting Clouds*. Kuosmanen has also appeared in the Kaurismäki films *Calamari Union*, *Shadows in Paradise*, *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*, and *Total Balalaika Show*.

The roles of the Golden Pint restaurant staff are played by **Janne Hyttiäinen** (Nyrhinen, the cook) and **Ilkka Koivula** (Calamnius, the doorman), both frequent Kaurismäki collaborators, and **Nuppu Koivu** (Mirja, the waitress), who is making her feature-film debut.

In the role of Mazdak, we see **Simon Hussein Al-Bazoon**, originally from Iraq, who has since his youth performed with several amateur theaters in Finland, appeared in short films and ads, and taught and choreographed dance. The role of Mazdak is Al-Bazoon's first in a feature film.

The musical performers featured in the film are **Tuomari Nurmio** (both solo and with the Dumari ja Spuget lineup), **Ismo Haavisto**, **Marko Haavisto ja Poutahaukat**, and **Harri Marstio** and **Antero Jakoila**.

CAST

<i>Khaled</i>	Sherwan Haji
<i>Wikström</i>	Sakari Kuosmanen
<i>Calamnius</i>	Ilkka Koivula
<i>Nyrhinen</i>	Janne Hyttiäinen
<i>Mirja</i>	Nuppu Koivu
<i>Wife</i>	Kaija Pakarinen
<i>Miriam</i>	Niroz Haji
<i>Mazdak</i>	Simon Hussein Al-Bazoon

CREDITS

Screenplay, director	Aki Kaurismäki
Cinematography	Timo Salminen
Lighting	Olli Varja
Production designer	Aki Kaurismäki
Costume designer	Tiina Kaukanen
Set designer	Markku Pätilä
Set decoration	Ville Grönroos Heikki Häkkinen
Sound designer	Tero Malmberg
Editor	Samu Heikkilä
Rerecording mixer	Olli Pärnänen/Meguru Film Sound Oy
Laboratory	Dirk De Jonghe/ DeJonghe Film Postproduction
Production	Aki Kaurismäki/Sputnik Oy
Coproduction	Misha Jaari, Mark Lwoff/Oy Bufo Ab Reinhard Brundig/Pandora Film
With the support of	The Finnish Film Foundation Finland 100 Programme The Church Media Foundation
With the participation of	YLE Coproductions ZDF/Arte